

## Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, January 30, 1902

1902, Jan. 30 My dear Father: —

In reply to your note of Jan. 27, I quite agree with you that three things are necessary: —

1. Punches, matrices and types;
2. A Visible Speech literature; and
3. A body of trained students.

We have the body of trained students; but no Visible Speech literature because we have no punches from which matrices can be made to cast type. It is not simply a question of money. Some one must DIRECT THE PUNCH MAKERS what to do. My hands are tied behind my back in numerous ways, and I can not undertake this necessary work. It all then comes back to this, will YOU do it? CAN you do it is a question in my mind. Have you strength to undertake the labor. It is not a question of money, Carnegie and all his millions could not do it, only you and I, and a very few others. I know from the experience of the past that if this is left to me it will not be done , although I will always want to do it.

Let us take one thing at a time. You admit that punches are absolutely necessary, that is number 1. From these come matrices and from the matrices type, and from the type with the aid of our trained students will come the Visible Speech literature, so that the whole thing narrows itself down to one point —

PUNCHES

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If you will order a full set of punches and superintend their manufacture — I will pay for them. Don't let's bother ourselves 2 with anything else for the present. We have here the sine qua non of the whole matter. Let us look THIS in the face — let us get the punches made — and then we can take steps to bring about the rest.

I do not want to discuss at the present time what should be done excepting to say that the trained students scattered over the United States should be brought together in the interest of Visible Speech. We want to bring together the scattered threads that exist and weave them into an enduring fabric — a poor simile — but it conveys my meaning. Organization into a body of those who already know the system, and through this body make provision for its perpetuation and dissemination

We have already had in America two conventions of teachers of Visible Speech, which were held many years ago in the city of Worcester, Mass. It would be possible to hold another, but I do not see that much good could come from a conference like this unless we are prepared to follow it up with printed literature to hold them together and to perpetuate their work.

Viva voce instruction, as you say, can not be dispensed with, but it can do no more in the future than it has done in the past. The viva voce influence dies with the instructors, and can only be made permanent through a printed literature.

Here I find myself already beginning to discuss questions that are questionable! And running off the track.

Revenons à nos moutons — PUNCHES.

Your Loving Son Alexander Graham Bell